

43. Abolition of license fees on boats and of tolls for entering the Alleppey municipal limits.

MR. K. SANKARA PANIKKAR (*Ambalapuzha taluk, Group I*) said that the need for abolishing license fees on *vallams* had been pressed at several sessions of the Assembly. The major part of the Ambalapuzha taluk was submerged under water during the rainy season. These low portions were parts of Kuttanad and the inhabitants were agriculturists. *Vallams* were an absolute necessity for them for their daily life, even for moving from one place to another. Every family had at least a boat and the number of boats each had varied with the status of the family. Such being the case, it was hard that the Government had restricted the use of their mode of conveyance by imposing a license fee and toll. A boat costing Rs. 100 had to pay a fee of Rs. 2 per annum and the toll on it was 1 ch. per *dien*. Assuming that a boat could be used for 50 years, the boat-owners had to pay a total license fee of Rs. 100 and tolls to the extent of Rs. 650. This was over and above the maintenance and repairing charges which the boat-owner had to defray. This exaction in the shape of license fee and toll was oppressive and objectionable. The boats were used by agriculturists for agricultural purposes and they paid land-tax while others who used boats for industrial purposes paid income-tax on their income from industry. There was thus no justification in levying license fee on boats and it should be abolished. The policy of the Government was to help the agriculturists as much as possible and it was with this object that the Land Mortgage Bank was established and the system of agricultural loans was introduced. But the levy of license fee went against this policy. It affected the poor ryots who were suffering on account of economic depression. Timber when used for building purposes was not taxed. Such being the case, there was no reason why it should be taxed when it was made into boats. Similarly, agricultural implements were not taxed. The boats should also be regarded as falling under this category.

As regards toll, it was levied at the same rate on all boats alike irrespective of their size and the weight they could carry. Even small boats were bound to pay these dues. The Government might say that it was levied by a local body *viz.* the Municipality. But the Government had the power to interfere in Municipal administration.

For the foregoing reasons, the member prayed that both the license fee and the toll levied on *vallams* should be abolished.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Without taxation, Mr. Sankara Panikkar, a Municipality cannot exist. Alleppey is a big and important Municipality; and if this source of revenue, to which it is entitled, is taken away, its resources will be less, and it will have less means for improving the health and welfare of the people.

44. Means of communication in North Travancore in general with special reference to the Kottayam taluk.

MR. K. U. ITTYAVIRA (*Kottayam taluk, Group I*) said that when compared to British India communications in Travancore